

## Zane Grey's Arizona Trips, January 1906 to April 1922

by Dr. Kevin Blake

When the Zane Grey outfit signed into the Wetherill Trading Post register in Kayenta, Arizona on April 16, 1922, Zane Grey made an unusual notation at the top of the signatures, as seen below. In his distinctive handwriting, Grey wrote "2<sup>nd</sup> trip to Nonnezoshe, 3<sup>rd</sup> trip to Kayenta, 18<sup>th</sup> trip to Arizona."

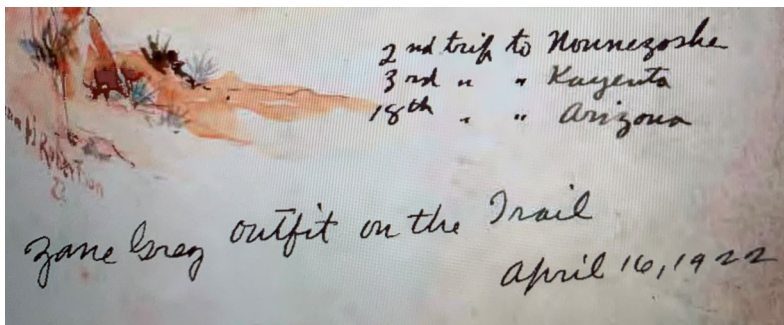
The Zane Grey outfit was in Kayenta on their way to Nonnezoshe, or Rainbow Bridge, again guided by John Wetherill. Grey made this notation in the register based on his own travel experiences; others in his party had been to Rainbow Bridge more times than he had, and some were making their first journey. Indeed, this was his 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to Rainbow Bridge (first in 1913), and 3<sup>rd</sup> trip to Kayenta (first in 1913, second in 1914). What surprised me when I first saw this notation is how precise Grey was with the number of Arizona trips. I wondered why he was keeping such an exact count, and could that number be accurate? It seemed like a large number given that Grey first went to Arizona on his honeymoon in 1906.

I put this speculation aside for quite a few years,

but recently returned to it when I began compiling what I call a "Zane Grey Travelogue." In my writings about the geography of Grey's Westerns, I have always been curious if and / or when he completed what I would call "fieldwork" for the book. When did he go to the book's setting, or on which trip did he gain the inspiration for the story? The travelogue covers all of Grey's trips, from 1906 through 1939, not only the ones that relate to his Westerns.

This "Zane Grey Travelogue" is still a work-in-progress, but I have compiled quite a few detailed records, with references, of dozens of Grey's trips. I have gleaned much of the information from biographies, literary studies, and journal articles about Grey (scholarly and popular), letters between Zane and Dolly, journals kept by Grey, newspaper articles about his travels, and Grey's own non-fiction stories published in magazines or books. There are still many archival materials (letters, journals, photographs) I need to consult, and I am in the process of re-reading the journals issued by Zane Grey's West Society.

Recently, I realized I could compare my "Zane Grey Travelogue" with Grey's tally of eighteen Arizona trips up to and including April 1922. With great anticipation I began counting the trips I had detailed and confirmed citations for, and . . . EIGHTEEN IT IS! It is exciting to document and better understand Grey's travels with this complete list of his Arizona trips (up to April 1922). Following is only a bare-bones list of his trips; I have omitted many details regarding specific dates, places visited, who he traveled with, and the purpose of his trip. I have included, though, the titles for some of his novels, the ones that match up with specific trips in terms of fieldwork.



*The Wetherill Trading Post Register dated April 16, 1922,  
with Zane Grey's notations.*

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*Zane Grey next to an ocotillo (fouquieria splendens), a desert shrub indigenous to the southwestern U. S.*

*Photo courtesy of Kevin Blake / ZGWS.*

### Zane Grey's Trips to Arizona, 1906 — 1922.

1. January 1906: Honeymoon trip to Grand Canyon.
2. March – April 1907: Buffalo Jones trip to Grand Canyon.
3. April – May 1908: Second Buffalo Jones trip to Grand Canyon; fieldwork for *The Heritage of the Desert*.
4. April 1911: Navajo National Monument (Betatakin); fieldwork for *Riders of the Purple Sage*.
5. February 1912: Arizona – Sonora border; fieldwork for *Desert Gold* and *The Light of Western Stars*.
6. April – May 1913: Kayenta, Rainbow Bridge; fieldwork for *The Rainbow Bridge*.
7. June – July 1914: Oak Creek Canyon, Kayenta.
8. August 1914: Flagstaff, on train trip from California (Catalina Island) to Lackawaxen, PA.
9. September 1915: Grand Canyon, White Mountains; fieldwork for *The Man of the Forest*.
10. September 1916: Grand Canyon, White Mountains; fieldwork for *The Man of the Forest*.
11. August 1917: Flagstaff, on train trip from California (Catalina Island) to Colorado.
12. September – October 1918: Grand Canyon, Tonto Basin; fieldwork for *To the Last Man*.

13. January 1919: Yuma; fieldwork for *Wanderer of the Wasteland*.

14. September – November 1919: Tonto Basin; fieldwork for *To the Last Man*, Grand Canyon.

15. September – November 1920: Tonto Basin; fieldwork for *To the Last Man*.

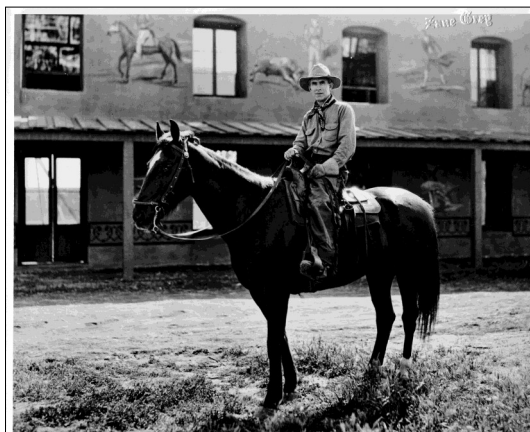
16. February 1921: Yuma; fieldwork for *Stairs of Sand*.

17. September – October 1921: Tonto Basin.

18. April – May 1922: Kayenta, Rainbow Bridge; fieldwork for *The Vanishing American*.

If you are curious, Grey's next trip to Arizona was in September and October 1922 to the Tonto Basin for fieldwork on *Code of the West*. I welcome comments, corrections, or questions about this list or the "Zane Grey Travelogue." Please email me at [kblake@ksu.edu](mailto:kblake@ksu.edu).

Thank you to Harvey Leake for permission to reprint a portion of the April 16, 1922 Wetherill Trading Post register. Also, please see these articles by Harvey Leake in the *Zane Grey Review* and the *Zane Grey Explorer* for more information about Grey's trips to Kayenta and Rainbow Bridge: "Room for One More Traveler," May 2005 (co-authored with Terree Duncan); "Contributions of the Wetherill Family to Zane Grey's *The Rainbow Trail*," "Zane Grey's Rainbow Bridge Expeditions," August 2015; "Zane Grey's Inscriptions at Rainbow Bridge," August 2015; "The History of the South Rainbow Trail," December 2018.



*Zane Grey on Night, on the set of Riders of the Purple Sage, Arizona, 1918.*

*Image courtesy of Kevin Blake.*